

The Smoking Car

they stop out front here
it looks as if the car is on fire
the smoke blazes blue from the hood and exhaust
the motor sounds like cannon shots
the car humps wildly
one guy gets out,
Jesus, he says, he takes a long drink from a
canvas water bag
and gives the car an eerie look.
the other guy gets out and looks at the car,
Jesus, he says,
and he takes a drink from a pint of whiskey,
then passes the bottle to his
friend.
they both stand and look at the car,
one holding the whiskey, the other the water bag.
they are not dressed in conventional hippy garb
but in natural old clothes
faded, dirty and torn.
a butterfly goes past my window
and they get back in the
car
and it bucks off in low
like a rodeo bronc
they are both laughing
and one has the bottle
tilted ...

the butterfly is gone
and outside there is a globe of smoke
40 feet in circumference ...

first human beings I've seen in Los Angeles
in 15 years.

Poetry, You Whore ...

dispelled by fantasies and madness
the bus driver grins while sweating in the heat
of the plateglass windshield,
he doesn't have a chance --
only Hollywood Boulevard, an impossible sun
and an impossible timetable.
there are so many without a chance.
sometimes I think I don't have a chance
and then I realize that there is very little chance
for any of
us. poetry won't save us or a job won't save us,

a good job or a bad
job.
we take a little bit and hang onto that until it is
gone.
gongs ring, dances begin, there are holidays and
celebrations ...
we try to cheat the bad dream ...
poetry, you whore, who will go to any man and then
leave him ...
the bus driver has Hollywood Boulevard
and I sit next to a fat lady who lays her dead thigh
against me.
there is a tiny roll of sweat behind one of the bus
driver's
ears. he is ashamed to brush it
away.
the people look ahead or read or look out their
windows.
the tiny roll of sweat begins to roll
it rolls along behind the ear
then down the neck,
then it's
gone.
Vine street, says the bus driver,
this is Vine
street.
he's right, at last. what a marvelous thing.
I get off at Vine street. I need a drink or something
to eat. I don't care about the bus
anymore. it is a
rejected poem. I don't need it
anymore.
there will be more busses.
I decide upon something to eat
with a drink as
openers.

I walk out of the dark and into the dark
and sit down and
wait.

-- Charles Bukowski

Los Angeles, CA

Poem

All the secrets
are telling themselves
it will soon be over